

We Claim:

- 5        1.        A personal cleansing composition comprising, based upon the total weight of the composition,:
  - a) from about 0.1 percent to about 12.5 percent of an anionic surfactant;
  - b) from about 0.1 percent to about 8 percent of a hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer;
- 10       wherein the weight ratio of component a) to component b) is about 1:1 to about 40:1 and the composition is substantially free of amphoteric surfactants and is mild to the skin.
- 15       2.        The composition of claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of component a) to component b) is about 2:1 to about 30:1.
- 20       3.        The composition of claim 1, wherein the anionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of alkyl sulfates, alkyl ether sulfates, sulfosuccinates, isethionates, acyl amides, alkyl ether carboxylates, alkyl phosphates, and mixtures thereof.
- 25       4.        The composition of claim 1, wherein the anionic surfactant is selected from the group consisting of alkyl ether sulfates, alkyl ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof.
- 30       5.        The composition of claim 1, wherein the hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer is comprised of at least one acidic monomer and at least one hydrophobic ethylenically unsaturated monomer.
6.        The composition of claim 5, wherein the at least one acidic monomer is an ethylenically unsaturated acid monomer capable of neutralization with a

base, and the at least one hydrophobic ethylenically unsaturated monomer is comprised of a hydrophobic carbon chain having at least three carbon atoms.

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7. The composition of claim 1, wherein the hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer is a composition derived from at least one unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer; at least one hydrophobic monomer; a hydrophobic chain transfer agent comprising alkyl mercaptans, thioesters, amino acid-mercaptan-containing compounds or peptide fragments, or combinations thereof; a cross-linking agent; and, optionally, a steric stabilizer; wherein the amount of said unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer is from about 60% to about 98% by weight based upon the total weight of said unsaturated monomers and said hydrophobic monomer.

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8. The composition of claim 1, wherein the hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer is an acrylates copolymer available under the tradename, "Carbopol Aqua SF-1."

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9. A personal cleansing composition comprising, based upon the total weight of the composition:

a) from about 4 percent to about 10 percent of an anionic surfactant selected from the group consisting of alkyl ether sulfates, alkyl ether carboxylates, and mixtures thereof; and

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b) from about 0.3 percent to about 6 percent of a hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer that is derived from at least one unsaturated carboxylic acid monomer; at least one hydrophobic monomer; a hydrophobic chain transfer agent comprising alkyl mercaptans, thioesters, amino acid-mercaptan-containing compounds or peptide fragments, or combinations thereof; a cross-linking agent; and, optionally, a steric stabilizer; wherein the amount of said unsaturated

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carboxylic acid monomer is from about 60% to about 98% by weight based upon the total weight of said unsaturated monomers and said hydrophobic monomer;

5 wherein the weight ratio of component a) to component b) is about 3:1 to about 20:1 and the composition is substantially free of amphoteric surfactants and is mild to the skin.

10 10. The composition of claim 9, wherein the hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer is an acrylates copolymer available under the tradename, "Carbopol Aqua SF-1."

15 11. A method of reducing skin irritancy in a detergent composition comprised of, based upon the total weight of the composition, from about 0.1 percent to about 12.5 percent of an anionic surfactant, comprised of:

a) adding a hydrophobically modified, crosslinked anionic acrylic copolymer thereto in an amount, based upon the total weight of the composition, from greater than about 0.1 percent to about 8 percent, under conditions sufficient, wherein the weight ratio of anionic surfactant to hydrophobically modified, crosslinked anionic acrylic copolymer is about 1:1 to about 40:1.

25 12. The composition of claim 11, wherein the hydrophobically modified, crosslinked, anionic acrylic copolymer is comprised of at least one acidic monomer and at least one hydrophobic ethylenically unsaturated monomer.

30 13. The composition of claim 12, wherein the at least one acidic monomer is an ethylenically unsaturated acid monomer capable of neutralization with a base, and the at least one hydrophobic ethylenically unsaturated monomer is comprised of a hydrophobic carbon chain having at least three carbon atoms.

14. The method of claim 11 wherein the hydrophobically modified,  
crosslinked anionic acrylic copolymer is an acrylates copolymer available under  
the tradename, "Carbopol Aqua SF-1."